MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

26 MARCH 1982

West Bank, Gaza Situation

Gaza Incident -- An IDF master sergeant was killed and three Israeli soldiers and three Gaza residents were injured when two masked persons threw a handgrenade at an Israeli military car, Jerusalem radio reported. Security forces have begun searching for the attackers. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine has claimed responsibility for the incident, according to Monte Carlo radio.

Mayors Dismissal -- Dismissed Nabulus Mayor Bassam ash-Shayk'ah said the Palestinians have a right to reject and fight against the Civilian Administration because it is illegal and viewed by the inhabitants as a racist, hostile element, ITIM reported. Like ash-Shak'ah, Ramallah Mayor Karim Khalaf also rejected the dismissal order and announced that he still regards himself as the town's elected mayor, Jerusalem radio reported. It also said Ramallah's Municipal Council decided not to recognize the removal order and reiterated its refusal to cooperate with the Civilian Administration.

According to Jerusalem radio's Arabic service, the dismissed mayors not only refused to cooperate with the Civilian Administration and resorted to provocation and instigation against it, but also pressured other mayors to be provocative and instigative.

Arab Reaction -- Branding the dismissal of the two West Bank mayors as the "epitome of fascist racist repression," a PLO Executive Committee statement broadcast by the clandestine Voice of Palestine radio said the Palestinians will continue the general strike, boycotting the enemy's institutions and stepping up various forms of struggle. The PLO spokesman in Bonn said his organization had been holding back in the interest of the search for a comprehensive peace, but now the PLO will no longer passively observe, the West German agency DPA reported.

The joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee called the dismissal of the Nabulus and Ramallah mayors a new Israeli "crime against legality," Amman radio reported. The committee decided to form a standing working committee to follow developments in the occupied homeland and supervise implementation of resolutions backing the uprising in the territories, the radio said.

Since the West Bank incidents have revealed the "iron fist" of the Israeli authorities, a role awaits the Israeli moderates who might be interested in rectifying their country's position, a Cairo AL-AHRAM editorial reported by MENA opined. Noting that this role requires getting closer to the Palestinians through understanding and dialogue, the paper also called on the Palestinians to try to get through to the Israli man in the street via a calm and effective discussion, thus widening the base of the moderates who could exert pressure inside Israel.

The Saudi Kingdom strongly denounced the "Zionist entity's acts of oppression and violence" and asked peace-loving nations to intervene, SPA reported.

In a cable carried by Damascus radio, the speaker of the Syrian People's Assembly asked the UN Security Council to adopt effective measures to force Israel to withdraw from the territories.

Israel

Labor Party Plans -- Labor Party sources implied that they might introduce another no-confidence motion next week over the government's handling of the West Bank, Jerusalem radio's English service reported.

Shamir Remarks -- The PLO is struggling against the autonomy plan for fear that its implementation will render the organization helpless, Foreign Minister Yitzhaq Shamir opined in a discussion with visiting French parliamentarians, ITIM reported. Despite the fact that by "murderous acts" the PLO obtained strong positions for its supporters during the 1976 elections in Judaea and Samaria, Israel believes that upon implementation of the autonomy, important Arab elements in the territories will join it, Shamir said.

Begin Interview -- Prime Minister Menahem Begin said in a 24 March interview with MA'ARIV that elections will be held within 12 to 18 months. He expressed confidence that the Likud will receive 52 to 55 seats and will be able to form a stable government with the same partners. Even if the government cannot in the meantime obtain a majority for its budget, this will not cause it to fall, Begin said, but such a situation would be unhealthy and therefore early elections are necessary. Dismissing as totally unfounded MK Hayim Druckman's idea that he could stop the Sinai withdrawal by toppling the government, Begin reiterated that Israel will fulfill all its commitments.

Yamit Situation -- IDF soldiers and policemen broke open Yamit's gates after their closure by members of the Movement To Stop the Sinai Withdrawal, according to Jerusalem radio. The soldiers tore down the fence around Yamit and detained withdrawal opponents, who put up passive resistance. The commander of the Southern Command stated that the soldiers will remain in Yamit, occupy vacant houses and prevent withdrawal opponents from entering them, the radio said.

Relations With Egypt -- Protesting Egypt's UN ambassador's remarks at the 24 March Security Council debate on the situation in the territories, Foreign Ministry Director General David Kimche told the Egyptian ambassador to Israel that the PLO is responsible for the loss of life in the territories by inciting the inhabitants out of fear of losing its influence, Jerusalem radio reported. Meanwhile, the Joint Egyptian-Israeli Military Committee concluded its meetings in Beersheba after drawing up a plan of action for completing the Sinai withdrawal, Cairo radio reported.

Lebanon

A group of pro-Iranian Iraqi Muslim commandos blew up the Iraqi oil pipeline in the Al-'Abdah area, near the Al-'Arqah River basin, according to reports from the Voice of Lebanon and clandestine Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution radios.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

Military Situation -- An Iraqi military spokesman cited by INA announced that Iraqi forces began a large offensive in the Shush-Dezful area, killing over 4,000 Iranians. Scores of enemy positions fell into Iraqi hands on 25 March, a war correspondent cited by INA wrote. Since 21 March, 15,998 Iranians have been killed, 140 enemy tanks destroyed, 58 tanks captured intact and 2 fighter aircraft and 2 helicopters downed, according to an Iraqi communique caried by INA. Iraq suffered 449 dead and lost 59 tanks and 2 fighter planes during the same period, the communique added.

The Iraqi counteroffensive has been foiled, Tehran radio claimed. A communique carried by the radio said Iranian forces were consolidating and stabilizing their positions. It added that an Iranian fighter aircraft shot down a MiG-23 southwest of Ahvaz, raising to 9 the total of Iraqi aircraft downed in the last 4 days. The number of prisoners recently transferred to Tehran has reached 4,697, the communique noted. Jordanian, Egyptian and Sudanese nationals have been observed among the prisoners, according to a Tehran radio report citing IRNA. The bodies of 15 Tunisians killed in the fighting have been transferred home, the same report said.

Khamene'i Remarks -- Iran is not planning to enter Iraqi soil after expelling enemy troops from the country, and despite the fact that it is in a position of strength, Iran will accept any just and logical peace, President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i said at a press conference reported by Tehran radio.

FBIS DAILY REPORT

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ERSHAD ADDRESSES NATION ON EVE OF NATIONAL DAY

BK260428 Dacca Domestic Service in Bengali 0100 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] The independence and national day is being celebrated throughout the country today in a fitting manner. On this day in 1971 the people waged the liberation war to free the country from the occupation forces and gained independence after 9 months of struggle that cost millions of lives.

In a nationwide broadcast over radio and television last night, Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen Hussain Mohammad Ershad said that a massive campaign has been launched on all fronts to save the nation from corruption and to restore law and order at all levels. He said that the martial law administration is firmly determined to wipe out the unholy machinations of the corrupt and vested interests not only in the administrative and production sectors but also in other fields of national life.

General Ershad said that in order to assuage the anger and indignation of the people we are taking realistic and effective steps against these hated, selfish and corrupt elements. All government agencies have been instructed to take legal action against the criminals without fear or favor. He called upon the people to extend full cooperation and support to the martial law administration so as to free the nation from disappointment and despair.

General Ershad said our political independence was achieved after many sacrifices but this independence will be meaningless without the economic emancipation of the masses. We have to achieve the dream of making a self-reliant and self-respecting nation. We have to make great strides to bring smiles to the faces of the common masses of the people.

He briefly recalled the circumstances which led to the promulgation of martial law in the country and said various members of the patriotic armed forces (?inspired) with their national responsibility and duty shared by the patriotic people [words indistinct] responsibility in every sphere of national life. On this day 11 years ago the whole nation engaged in a united struggle against a foreign overlord's troops and its agents. In the bloody war of independence the people made great sacrifices and did not hesitate to lay down their lives for the freedom of the people. [passage indistinct]

United struggle against atrocities is one of our national characteristics. This has been demonstrated several times in the past and, God willing, if the need arises, the whole nation will come forward with the same spirit to contain any situation in the future.

General Ershad called for rising above all narrow and selfish interests and to come forward to safeguard the interests of the nation. We have to make a correct appraisal of our goal of national development and move forward with self-analysis and rectification. We must move ahead toward building the country and consolidating our independence and sovereignty inspired by the noble spirit of the war of independence. He said: I am firmly convinced that the whole nation will be able to successfully face this challenge with united efforts, honesty and dedication no matter how formidable the obstacles.

General Ershad expressed his gratitude to almighty allah for the courage and strength with which the patriotic armed forces came forward to safeguard and consolidate national independence and sovereignty. He paid glowing tribute to the memory of the valiant sons of the soil who laid down their lives for a future of freedom and dignity.

CMLA LIMITS OFFICIAL SEMINARS, TRAVEL ABROAD

BK251739 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Text] The chief martial law administrator [CMLA] issued two martial law orders tonight. Martial Law Order No 1 [number as heard] says there shall be a complete ban on holding of seminars or workshops whatsoever organized by any government, semigovernment, autonomous organizations and sector corporation without prior written permission of the chief martial law administrator or any officer authorized by him.

Martial Law Order No 2 [number as heard] says no official of the government, semigovernment, autonomous organization or sector corporation shall be allowed to proceed abroad whether on the government expenses or otherwise without prior permission obtained from the chief martial law administrator or any officer authorized by him.

CMLA REDESIGNATES MINISTRIES, DIVISIONS

BK260941 Dacca Domestic Service in English 0835 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] The chief martial law administrator [CMLA] has redesignated the existing ministries and divisions. The names of the redesignated ministries and divisions are:

President's Secretariat: A. general and economic; B. personnel; C. science and technology;

CMLA Secretariat: A. cabinet; B. establishment; C. implementation; and D. anticorruption;

Defense and Civil Aviation: A. defense; B. civil aviation;

Finance and Planning; A. finance; B. internal resources; C. banking and investment; D. external resources; E. inspection; F. planning and G. statics;

Agriculture: A. agriculture and forest; B. fisheries and livestock;

Food and Relief: A. food; B. relief and rehabilitation;

Transport and Communication: A. railways, road, highways and road transport; B. port, shipping and inland water transport; C. post, telegraph and telephone;

Foreign Affairs;

Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives;

Flood Control, Energy and Mineral Resources: A. flood control and water resources; B. power; and C. petroleum and mineral resources;

Industries: A. industries; B. jute; and C. textiles;

Education, Religious Affairs, Sports and Cultural Affairs: A. education; B. religious affairs; C. youth, sports and culture;

Commerce: A. foreign trade; B. commerce and tourism;

Public Works and Urban Development;

Law, Land Administration and Land Reforms: A. law and parliamentary affairs; and B. land administration and reforms;

Information and Broadcasting;

Home affairs;

Health and Population control; A. health; B. population control;

Labor and Manpower: A. labor; B. manpower; and

Social Welfare and Women's Affairs: A. social welfare; B. women affairs.

THREE APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNOUNCED

BK251726 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1705 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Text] Chief Martial Law Adminstrator [CMLA] Lt Gen Hussain Mohammad Ershad appointed three persons as members of the Council of Advisers. The council will advise the CMLA in running the administration of the country. The advisers and their portfolios are:

Rear Admiral Mahmud Ali Khan -- deputy chief martial law administrator and the chief of Naval Staff, Ministry of Transport and Communications;

Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud -- deputy chief martial law adminstrator and chief of Air Staff, Ministry of Flood Control, Energy and Mineral Resources;

Mr K.A. Bakr -- Ministry of Law, Land Administration and Land Reform. In addition he will continue in his present appointment as the attorney general.

The other ministries will remain with the chief martial law administrator until he appoints more advisers.

FORMER OFFICIALS ARRESTED, OTHERS SOUGHT

BK260214 Dacca Domestic Service in Bengali 0100 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] Abdus Samad, former chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation; Abdul Manna, former managing director of the Bangladesh Biman [Airways]; and Allahuddin Sikdar, retired joint secretary of the Ministry of Land Reform and Land Administration, have been arrested on charges of corruption. This was announced by the martial law authorities in Dacca last night.

Former Deputy Prime Ministers Jamaluddin Ahmed and S.A. Bari and former Minister K.M. Obaidur Rahman were not available in their residences and their whereabouts are not known. The martial law authorities have told the public that anyone knowing the whereabouts of these three former ministers should inform the police control room immediately.

Others Arrested

BK260904 Dacca Domestic Service in English 0839 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] One former minister and two former state ministers along with 212 persons have been arrested so far from all over the country on charges of corruption, misuse of power and antistate activities. An announcement by the Chief Martial Law Administrator Secretariat said the former ministers arrested are Saifur Rahman and the State Ministers Atauddin Khan and Tanvir Ahmed Siddique.

AFP: AWAMI LEAGUE LEADER PUT UNDER ARREST

BK251801 Hong Kong AFP in English 1735 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Text] New Delhi, 25 Mar (AFP) -- Bangladesh opposition Awami League Chairman Sheikh Hasina Wajed has been put under arrest in Dacca by the marshal law administration following the military coup Wednesday, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) reported tonight.

Quoting reports reaching at Agartala, capital of the Indian border state of Tripura, from across the frontier, the agency said over 500 people had been taken into custody in various parts of Bangladesh.

In fact, the lists of those billed for detention had been sent by the army authorities to all districts before hand. The Dacca cantonment issued urgent instructions to the civilian authorities to assist the army in the pre-dawn rounding up, the agency added.

In another dispatch from Dacca, PTI described the scene in the Bangladesh capital hours after the coup struck.

Deposed President Sattar left the presidential palace in the afternoon, silently accepting earlier the liquidation of his four-month regime.

The president's guard regiment, drawn from the armed forces, did not make a whimper when troops poured into "Banga Bhavan" (president's house) in the early hours, the agency reported.

OFFICIAL ASSURES NO CHANGE IN FOREIGN POLICY

BK261353 Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1330 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] Bangladesh will honor all treaties and agreements made with other countries and multilateral and bilateral commitments to them. This was stated by Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Humanyu Rashid Chowdhury in his first briefing at Dacca of the accredited heads of foreign missions after the imposition of martial law. He said the new government will continue to foster and strengthen bilateral relations with all countries in general and neighbors in particular.

PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS CONGRATULATE ERSHAD

BK251423 Dacca Domestic Service in English 1255 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Text] The Bangladesh Freedom fighters Association, Bangladesh People's (Muslim) League, Bangladesh [words indistinct] and some other organizations have congratulated the chief martial law administrator, Lt Gen Hussein Mohammad Ershad, and the patriotic armed forces for assuming the responsibility of governing the country. They said the imposition of the martial law in the country is a correct step to safeguard the national sovereignty, independence and save the country from its economic disaster.

NEWSPAPERS SEE MILITARY TAKEOVER AS NECESSARY

BK251521 Hong Kong AFP in English 1505 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Text] Dacca, 25 Mar (AFP) -- Bangladesh newspapers today welcomed yesterday's military take over of the government saying the move had been indispensable in saving the nation from the frustration, inefficiency and corruption of the previous government of President Abdus Sattar.

Most of the morning papers yesterday missed the news but published special afternoon issues on the imposition of martial law by Army Chief Lt. Gen. Hussain Mohammad Ershad who ousted the hardly five-month-old civilian government of Mr Sattar, elected president last November for a five-year term.

General Ershad, who took over as chief martial law administrator and supreme commander of the three forces, suspended the Constitution, dissolved parliament and the 22-member Cabinet saying that the nation had lost all confidence in the inefficient and corrupt government of the ruling party Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

The government-managed Bangladesh OBSERVER, in a front page editorial captioned "Timely Action" said that once again in the troubled history of Bangladesh the patriotic armed forces rose to the occasion at a very critical time for the nation, and that there had hardly been any alternative.

General Ershad was directly responding to the people's silent demand when he said that his was a crusade against corruption throughout the country, the OBSERVER said.

"We felt reassured not only by the sense of commitment expressed in the general tone of General Ershad's speech but also by the assurance that the democratic process would be reinitiated in a far healthier, renovated, socio-politico-economic framework.

"That indeed ought to be kept in sharp focus. It is, of course, not the democratic values that have failed in this country, it is the human custodians of them that have failed", the OBSERVER added.

The opposition Bengali Daily BANGLAR BANI, which is owned by a relation of Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina Wajed, also front-paged an editorial hailing General Ershad.

In an editorial captioned "Let the Spell of Darkness Be Over", the paper referred to Gen. Ershad's repeated mention of his respect for democracy and commitment to restore democracy at the earliest, and said that the people have reasons to express their confidence in the commitments of the military government.

The paper also expressed satisfaction at the peaceful military takeover and said not a single drop of blood has been shed.

The largest circulation Bengali daily ITTEFAQ said in an editorial that there was no denying the fact that the nation was passing through a grave crisis particularly because of the repeated failures of the corrupt civilian government of Mr Sattar.

The change was not surprising to the people who, the paper observed, wanted an end to uncertainites, sufferings and unbearable situations. The paper carried a banner heading on Gen. Ershad's commitment to wipe out corruption along with his photograph.

Another Bengali daily DAINIK DESH owned by a former minister in Mr Sattar's ousted government, hailed the military takeover describing it as a new chapter in national life.

277 PRISONERS RELEASED FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

BK261358 Hong Kong AFP in English 1319 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Excerpts] Dacca, 26 Mar (AFP) -- Martial law authorities have banned travel abroad by officials and the holding of seminars or conferences without permission in what is seen as a bid to put a lid on government spending.

Authorities also ordered the immediate release of 277 prisoners on the eve of 11th anniversary celebrations of Bangladesh's independence.

A Home Ministry announcement last night said the government decided to withdraw cases against certain categories of under-trial prisoners and remit the sentences of some convicts on compassionate grounds.

Those released included 65 persons held under the Special Powers Act of 1974. The announcement did not say if there were any political detainees among the released prisoners.

BREZHNEV GREETS ERSHAD ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

BK260850 Dacca Domestic Service in English 0838 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] President Brezhnev of the Soviet Union has sent congratulations to the chief martial law administrator on the Independence Day. In his message, the Soviet president said relations of friendship and cooperation established between the two countries will be further developed to the mutual benefit of the two countries.

ONE KILLED IN ATTACK ON U.S. CONSULATE IN BOMBAY

BK260307 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0247 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] In Bombay, one person was killed in an incident of firing outside the office of the American consular general yesterday. Agency reports say the consulate was attacked by a group of people who damaged some cars parked inside. The Bombay police commissioner told the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA that the members of the group shouted slogans condemning America's arms policy. Thirty people have been arrested. Peace was restored within 2 hours of the incident.

Ministry Expresses Regret

BK261245 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] The Ministry of External Affairs has expressed regret to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi over the attack by some persons on the American Consulate in Bombay yesterday.

A government statement in both houses of the parliament today said that some persons belonging to the Azad Hind Sena [Indian Independent Forces] were involved in the incident.

The chief secretary to the Maharashtra Government has assured the U.S. Consulate of full safety.

Four persons including the leader of the organization have been arrested. One person was killed in the incident.

VENKATARAMAN ON USTINOV VISIT, DEFENSE NEEDS

BK261025 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 26 Mar 82

[Text] India is considering a proposal for the indigenous manufacture of an advanced version of the MiG fighter aircraft. Defense Minister Venkataraman told the Lok Sabha today that this was among the matters discussed with Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Ustinov who was recently in India. It has also been decided to replace the air transport fleet of Dakotas and Packets by the AN-32 Soviet aircraft.

Venkataraman was replying to the debate on the budget demands for his ministry which the house later voted. Reaffirming India's policy of friendship and peace, particularly with its neighbors, the defense minister pointed out that Pakistan has been acquiring arms far beyond its requirements. Even though its military responsibility had gone down, it went on increasing its military strength. India did not react, but when Pakistan started acquiring the most sophisticated weapons we have been obliged to match them. Though it proclaims that it is facing a threat from Afghanistan, the weapons that Pakistan is acquiring cannot be used in that area. Nor can the ships and other naval equipment be meant to face a threat from Afghanistan. Moreover, all this equipment is being massed on the side of the border with India. Clearly the threat to India's security has increased. Collection of so much explosive material on one side of the border makes it necessary for India to keep at least its [word indistinct] fighting equipment ready.

The defense minister expressed the country's deep appreciation for the devotion of the armed forces to their duty and to their high morale. Amidst cheers from both sides of the house, he said the nation is fully behind them.

KHAMENE'I SPEAKS TO PRESS ABOUT WAR WITH IRAQ

LD251530 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Excerpts] Dear listeners. As you heard in the newscast, last night President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i took part in a radio and television press conference in Mashhad and replied to reporters' questions.

According to IRNA, in this press conference he described the recent victories of the victorious forces of Islam over the disintegrating forces of Saddam and the strengthening of the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the world. He called the 1361 [starting on 21 March 1982] the year of work and inventiveness. He expressed the hope that with the ending of the imposed war and the certain defeat of Saddam, activities geared reconstructing the country will progress with greater speed.

Concerning the situation at the fronts and evaluating the glorious victories of the forces of Islam, the president said this battle was one of the most decisive clashes during the war. Iraq never though it would be smashed in this way by the forces of Islam in this region; the heights which were behind them were such that they regarded themselves as being in a very strong position. In addition to this, Iraq brought its strongest and ablest forces to the region. In this way, Saddam thought he could occupy Dezful and cut off a very important communication route which connected Khuzestan, and the south generally, with the center and north of the country. The reason for the intense enemy fire over Dezful and the areas around it was to see if they could empty the town of the people and deprive our fighters of their natural supporters.

In answer to a question about the role of these victories in exporting the revolution he said: Every political, economic, cultural or military victory achieved by us brings our revolutionary culture closer to its goal. In view of the propaganda of the Islamic Republic's enemies who claim the Islamic Republic will not be able to run the country and the nation, nor solve Iran's problems, the achievement of these victories proves that the Iranian nation, Islamic principles and ideology have the ability to solve the problems of the region. This has been proven both on the battlefield and in political, economic and other fields. Therefore, first of all, our nation is happy and hopeful as a result of these victories and believes that the enemy conspiracies to destroy the Islamic Republic have been futile. Second, those governments which have supported the Islamic Republic will be strengthened, and those who have remained indifferent to the struggles between Iran and great powers of the world will realize that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a reality and that they have to recognize this reality and not vainly oppose it. This is very important for the sake of establishing and confirming the Islamic Republic in the region.

In reply to the question of what the position of the Government of the Islamic Republic will be after liberating the area under foreign occupation, defeating Saddam and reaching legal borders, the president said: The Islamic Republic has no wish to occupy a part of the territory of the neighboring country of Iraq. It is true we do not believe in geographical boundaries with our victories and successes. Our aim in this battle is to defend our country against the enemy which has attacked our country. With the strength of Islam and the faith which has enlivened our nation, we succeeded in expelling this enemy from a part of our country under conditions which are clear to all. Therefore, we are not planning to enter Iraqi territory, but we believe that when the Iraqi forces are defeated and return to Iraq in a disintegrated state, everything will change and the Iraqi people will gain a new attitude and the imposed regime which is ruling over the people with bayonets will not be able to continue any longer.

Although today we have gained unprecedented victories and we do not believe the Iraqi forces will be able to withstand us, we in no way reject peace missions. Let them come and give us their proposals. Although we are in a position of strength, we will accept any just and logical peace. However, as we have repeatedly said in the past, a peace which is to be imposed upon us and which violates justice will in no way be acceptable to us.

In reply to the question: How do you foresee the outcome of the recent victories of the forces of Islam in the Middle East and in the progressive and reactionary Arab countries, the president said: The progressive countries of the region which are in favor of the Islamic revolution will be greatly strengthened. It is possible that some of the middle-of-the-road and hesitant countries may also join them. But I think, as a result of our recent victories, the opponents of the Islamic Republic and those countries which are 100 percent dependent on foreign domination and on America will come to the conclusion that conspiring against a revolution which is based on the people and on Islam is futile. I think that as a result of our advances in various political, economic, cultural, military and other fields, the atmosphere of the region will lean toward the Islamic revolution of Iran and the governments which have adopted a hostile position against us will reexamine their positions.

At the moment, although there is a strong possibility that propaganda conspiracies will start, it is also possible that the big powers will take the initiative and bring about some change in Iraq's ruling circles. I announce that such an initiative will not be tolerated by the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people will not tolerate a new organization set up by the Americans and other foreign powers in Iraq, even if it has the mask of a revolutionary and popular regime, and will not be satisfied with anything less than a popular, Islamic government.

The president added: Of course, we always expect incitements by the superpowers in the Persian Gulf and their direct or indirect assistance to the domestic counterrevolutionaries. Therefore, in accordance with our past experiences, we also expect that those who are dependent upon the superpowers and who are unsuccessful in Iran, will show their anger at the victory of the forces of Islam. In any case, they will not refrain from engaging in any activities which they may be capable of. However, we believe these challenges will lead to the victory of Islam and further disgrace and shame for the domineering world powers.

Concerning the fighting ability of our forces under the present conditions, the president said: Today, the fighting capability of our forces is greater and better than ever before; because in view of the large number of volunteers, none of our military, guards or mobilization units is facing any personnel shortages. If at any time this possibility arose and an announcement were made calling for volunteers, thousands of our young people, and even old people, would go the fronts. Also, in addition to this, faith in the future, which God has bestowed upon these people, will be made stronger as a result of these victories. Therefore, today, both from a psychological point of view and from a manpower point of view, our position is better than before. In terms of fighting ability, our forces have seized a large quantity of weapons and ammunitions in these clashes. Although, contrary to Iraq, we do not receive a flood of weapons from all and sundry, with the grace of God and as a result of repeated Iraqi defeats, an unlimited number of weapons are put at the disposal of the forces of Islam. In fact, in this way God has opened the way for His servants.

In answer to the question: In your recent speech, you emphasized the need to observe the law; what will be the effect of this emphasis on law upon the administration of the country and the rule of law and discipline, the president said: We believe that if there are no laws, chaos and confusion will ensure and this will be a deadly disease for this revolution, because as long as the revolution exists in society within the framework of revolutionary laws one can claim that the revolution is safe. Of course, at times there are some people in society who wish to go beyond the legal framework. We do not believe that those who have such views and motives are friends of the revolution. Our emphasis upon laws and the observation of the law is because our constitution and the laws which have emanated from it have come into being as a result of the blood of the martyrs and the efforts of those who have made many sacrifices. Therefore, the fact that laws and revolution must go together is a part of the Islamic revolution. If we wish our revolution to remain secure, we should respect the laws of the revolution. It is in view of this that I emphasize that all the organizations of the country, whether revolutionary or state organizations, as well as all individuals should respect the law and should know that the law is a means for administering the country.

At the end of this interview the president said: I hope this will be a good, successful and happy year and, according to the famous saying, a good year may be judged by its spring. In the first few days of the spring Almighty God gave a good present to the Iranian people. In this year, more than anything else we need creativity, activity, work and production. God willing, when the war is over the time will come for reconstruction and repair. On the whole, we can regard 1361 as the year of work and inventiveness.

INTERIOR MINISTER VIEWS CURRENT OFFENSIVE

GF251735 Mashhad Domestic Service in Persian 1437 GMT 25 Feb 82

[Unidentified Mashhad radio correspondent interview with Iranian Interior Minister Nateq-Nuri in Mashhad -- date not given, recorded]

[Excerpts] [Question] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Dear listeners, as you know, during Nowriz our dear president and a number of government officials came to Mashhad. We have the opportunity to talk with the esteemed interior minister, Mr Nateq-Nuri. Greetings. Can you tell us the reason for your trip to Mashhad?

[Answer] The first aim was pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza. I also used the opportunity to meet the brothers of the various organizations, including law enforcement agencies. It was, in my opinion, very useful to meet the brothers in police, gendarmerie, guards, reconstruction crusade and brother members of the Islamic Revolution Committee as well as a number of our employees and colleagues in the province.

[Question] (?Another matter which has come up recently) and delighted everyone are the recent battle victories. We have been at war for over 1 and 1/2 years and this victory is of great interest to our people since they want the war to end soon and to the advantage of Islam. They are eager for fresh news about the war. If you have any news about this for the people of Khorasan please, tell us.

[Answer] I would like to congratulate our combatants and dear ones on these notable victories in the war. It is a source of pride that a nation which has been carrying out a war for 1 and 1/2 years with all enemies headed by the United States and its satellites can still carry out such (?strong) attacks. In this attack our dear ones have achieved the best victories in 'Eyn Khosh, which is extremely importnat to us from the military point of view, as well as the various portions of this axis. Each of these is a fortress and our brothers were able to capture them and the road to Reqabiyeh and Reqabiyeh itself. This axis was and is militarily very sensitive to us. The enemy has concentrated his largest force on this axis since the beginning of the war. This is because, for the enemy, the capture of Dezful and the cutting-off of the Ahvaz-Tehran road and Andimeshk axis was vital. Had, the enemy achieved this aim, God forbid, the Dezful and Andimeshk axis being the throat of our Khuzestan, it would have cut contact with the center. Therefore, Iraq concentrated its best trained forces on this axis. According to information in our possession for some time, their battalions and support armies as well as reserves were concentrated behind this front and the enemy wanted to immobilize us in this axis. With the grace of God and the blessings of Islam, our dear ones were able to capture the entire area of 'Eyn Khosh, Reqabiyeh, Dehloran road and all sides with their interesting daily and nightly operations.

An interesting point is that people must have seen the Iraqi POW's who marched in Tehran today. A great number of them have not yet been transferred behind the fronts. We have been informed that there is a shortage of transportation facilities for them. In the clash of this morning alone -- and my information is up to this afternoon -- we captured another 2,000 or 3,000. The interesting thing is that the Iraqis announced that they have defeated the Iranians and are moving forward. [He laughs at this point.] They said they will be showing the Iranian prsioners. The Baghdad regime invited foreign correspondents to go and watch the march of the Iranian prisoners today. According to our information, all our dear ones captured since the beginning of the war -- they do not number over 2,000 and some of them are ordinary people from Qasr-e Shirin, Dehloran, Khuninshahr and such -- were gathered and were supposed to be marching today. Iraq pretended they were taken prisoners the past 2 or 3 days.

This is as usual. When we took Bostan, Iraq said it advanced. When we captured Abadan and broke the siege, Iraq said it had advanced. In this instance, they will come from international organizations, God willing, and the drum of Saddam's disgrace will yet again be beaten. God willing, we hope this is a beginning -- at the start of the year 1361 -- for us to push the enemy forcefully and quickly from all areas and across the border and, God willing, the Iraqi nation will then send Saddam and his defeat to the garbage bin of history.

[Question] Yes, as you said, Saddam has claimed they are advancing. Can't we say that the claim is true but applies from Shush in the direction of Iraq?

[Answer] Yes, it is possible. We have reports they have turned around and have no longer any ability to resist. The advance is toward Iraq.

[Question] Another very important matter for us who work in news organizations [words indistinct] concerns the broadcast of important international news. On the night of our greatest attack since the beginning of the war -- we monitored foreign broadcasts -- the BBC did not say anything about it. This shows their true intention and that of imperialism to ignore important news which is advantageous to Iran. They even discuss [word indistinct] of Iraq. Have you any further information on this?

[Answer] Yes, now that you mention it, I recall the victory of our brothers in Abadan. I remember I had gone to the interparliamentary conference in Cuba. We were returning and were in Spain at the time. We listened to Radio Iran and heard the news of the victory of our dear ones in Abadan. When we listened to other radios, BBC and others passed by the issue without a second glance. Of course, this strengthened our belief that they are the slaves of imperialism and are lackeys whose masters have not given them permission. They will remain silent so long as their masters do not give them permission. This is natural for us since Britain, the United States and France are naturally against us. If they were on our side and their radios spoke in our favor, then we might have doubted our revolution. It is right that they should oppose us.

[Question] Another question concerns the shortage of food in Khorasan Province. We have heard remarks as well as interviews on this. I wish to use this opportunity to ask you about it.

[Answer] According to my information, the major problem in Khorasan was with rice and its destruction as well as gasoline which is not a staple but is still a problem. In the past when I cam to Mashhad I saw long lines. This was when I was in the majlis and was not in charge of a ministry. I always wondered why Mashhad had such long lines. Recently, and according to travelers, they have not been seen. The reasons for their existence and disappearance are: We have to bring fuel to the province from very long distances. During the war the shortage of transportation and spareparts, which could have aided us greatly, as well as occasional incidents, intensified the problem. For example, some of our fuel has to be imported. Recently, some ships coming to Imam and other ports hit mines, and since their owners are merchants and not committed like our combatants, they have been avoiding those ports. We are forced to use road transportation facilities instead. Naturally, the tankers we used for transporting gasoline [to the provinces] are now used for this purpose and to fill that vacuum. This gives us only 1/3 of the transportation facilities which can carry only enough fuel for (?its own use). Therefore, this causes a shortage, especially in distant provinces.

We hope that by ending the war and with more attention by the Oil Ministry officials we will alleviate the provincial problems with both gasoline and heavy fuel oil used in agriculture, which is an important occupation in the provinces. We hope with their revolutionary patience the people will continue to cooperate with us in this field, as they have in the past, so that we can overcome all the problems.

JOINT STAFF COMMUNIQUE NO 831 ON FIGHTING

LD252144 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Mar 82

[Communique No 831 of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. Our armed forces, the brave military men, strong guards, heroic police and gendarmerie, and self-sacrificing peshmergas, together with the combatant strata of the nation and the corps and the valiant mobilization are an integrated and great power and like an iron barrier are standing against all the powers. Since the Almighty, Islam and the holy Koran are the motives of their battle, and martyrdom and joining God are their goal, they will be victorious -- words of Iman Khomeyni.

Oh imam, now your self-sacrificing soldiers, who are prepared to give their lives, are once again going to convey the clear voice of Islam to the people of the world through the bloody throat of Husayn [third Shi'ite imam and symbol of martydom on the battlefront] and his aides: They are going to fly the flag of Muhammadan Islam over the world; they are going to bring to fruition the message of the Islamic revolution martyrs who are resting in blood and the imposed war and are going to consign Saddam and the Saddamists to the graveyard of history forever.

Muslim and heroic Iranian nation, the combatants of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the true supporters and the faithful followers of the school of Husayn, may peace be upon him, in line with the glorious uprising of the symbol of freedom and the pioneer of the liberation of mankind, by their brave attack on the mercenaries of the despotic Saddamist regime and by annihilating and routing those who have committed aggression against the Islamic homeland, have taken the world by surprise.

Following the Fat'h operations, the combatants of Islam recaptured a vast area of the occupied zones and at present are seriously performing their other missions and are also consolidating and stabilizing their positions.

At 0752 today one Iraqi MiG-23 southwest of Ahvaz was hit by a fighter aircraft of the air force of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it crashed. So in the last 4 days, nine enemy aircraft have been shot down by the air defense units and the fighter aircraft of the air force. The valuable role of the heroic pilots and personnel of the air force in guarding the airspace of the operational areas and also the round-the-clock efforts of the pilots and personnel of the transport aircraft of this force during the Fat'h operation are praiseworthy and admirable, as are their other activities in the war.

Today, 3,172 Iraqi POW's arrived in Tehran, amid cries of "God is great" from crowds of the committed and faithful people of the capital; POW's transferred to Tehran during the recent battle now total 4,697.

While our combatants were active in the Fat'h operations, their other heroic brothers were dealing effective blows to Saddam's Army by crushing the positions of the enemies of Islam on the other southern fronts, from (Chazzabeh) to Darkhovin and from Darkhovin to the north of Abadan and also throughout the western fronts of the country. In the (Chazzabeh) and Tarrah areas our forces opened fire on Iraqi servicemen, killing or wounding 150 of them. In the Abadan area 4 ammunition dumps, 22 trenches and foxholes and one assembly point of the enemy were set on fire. The enemy's casualties in this area were at least 11 dead or wounded.

Heavy weapons fire from the gendarmerie of the Islamic Republic of Iran on enemy positions destroyed nine trenches and foxholes and two ammunition dumps on the other side of the Arvand Rud.

The brave and pride-inspiring personnel of the navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran are performing their duties with full power and superiority in guarding the Iranian waters as usual. In the Khoramshahr area, the units of this force opened fire on enemy positions in the occupied zone, killing several Iraqis and destroying one truck carrying fuel and three enemy trenches and observation posts.

In operational areas in the west of the country the Saddamists' losses and casualties have been considerable. In the Marivan area the enemy's positions came under mortar fire from our forces. As a result 10 trenches and foxholes of the aggressors were destroyed, 20 Iraqi military men were killed or wounded, and 1 mortar together with its ammunition was completely destroyed.

In the areas of Gilan-e Gharb, (Tang-e Hajiyan), and (Ban Siran) and on the axis of Sar-e Pol-e Zahab, (Bazi Deraz) and (Kaseh Shur), exchanges of fire continued and the enemy's positions were completely crushed. As a result of our fire superiority in these areas the enemy's mortar and artillery fire was silenced, its supply route was blocked, several Saddamists were wounded and several supply points and one 106-mm rifle of the Iraqi units were destroyed.

Exchanges of fire continued sporadically in (Meymak), (Shur Shirin) and (Band-e Kabud). The gerdarmerie combatants intensely fired on the enemy's positions in (Band Sheytan) and inflicted losses and casualties upon them. In the Sumar area one tank, one heavy machinegun and eight supply points of the aggressive Iraqi Army were set on fire and destroyed.

As a result of our forces' fire on enemy positions in the (Biyarah), Halabjah and Rawshan areas considerable losses were inflicted on the Saddamists, and on the Khurmal Road one vehicle of the Iraqi soldiers together with its occupants was destroyed.

A group of our heroes in the Sayyid Sadiq area carried out special operations, killed or wounding several Iraqi military men, and they returned safely to base.

PRIME MINISTER MUSAVI MEETS KURDISH STUDENTS

GF241420 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 24 Mar 82

[Text] Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi went to the camp of Kordestan Islamic Revolution Guard Corps students in the Tehran Technological Complex yesterday. In ceremonies which began with a recital of verses from the holy Koran, a number of the students sang a Kurdish song. An article by the students for the prime minister was read. Following that, the prime minister in a speech congratulated everyone on the arrival of the fourth spring of freedom and also on the great victory of the Islamic combatants in the battlefronts of right against wrong.

He said: These victories are in reality also victory against the internal counterrevolutionaries since all of them are targeted on one point and they have ties with one another. For example, the internal counterrevolution tried to blow up a revolution guard ammunition dump next to which some POW's were located. It had several aims behind this act. One was to weaken the morale of the fighters and the other to make propaganda against the Islamic Republic concerning the murder of Iraqi POW's.

He added: All of us Muslims have our attention focused on one point and one source of [word indistinct] and see ourselves connected to one line. This matter creates unity among Muslims.

The prime minister then distributed gifts among the children of Kurdish martyrs.

74 MKO MEMBERS, ADVOCATES ARRESTED IN SHIRAZ

LD192112 Tehran IRNA in English 1938 GMT 19 Mar 82

[Text] Tehran, 19 Mar (IRNA) -- Revolutionary guards in Shiraz have discovered 15 hideouts of the terrorist monafeqin [hypocrites] organization [Mojahedin-e Khalq] [MKO] and have arrested 34 important members of the MKO as well as 40 active advocates of this U.S.-aligned splinter group during the past month. With the discovery of these hideouts, a number of the agents of the recent assassinations in Shiraz were identified, said a report issued today by the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps], which further added that five MKO members were also killed during the raids on the MKO hideouts. From these houses, added the report, nine G-3 guns, seven Colts, nine grenades, one carbine gun as well as some documents and six cars were seized by the revolutionary guards.

In another development, a last member of the MKO in the city of Gach Saran, in Kohkiluyeh Va Boyer Ahmad Province, was arrested by the IRGC on Thursday.